

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BANGKO 13341 100922Z
ACTION EA-12

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AMEMBASSY PARIS
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AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

CONFIDENTIAL BANGKOK 13341

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP, TH, US
SUBJECT: NEW THAI AMBASSADORIAL APPOINTMENTS

1. ALTHOUGH NOT PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED YET, THE BANGKOK POST MORNING OF MAY 10 REPORTED THE FOLLOWING THAI AMBASSADORIAL APPOINTMENTS. MFA OFFICIAL IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF SAME DAY INDICATED PRESS REPORT WAS ESSENTIALLY CORRECT, THOUGH HE WAS RELUCTANT TO CONFIRM IT EXPLICITLY (MOST PROBABLY BECAUSE THE APPOINTMENTS HAVE NOT BEEN FINALLY CONFIRMED).

2. DR. LOSON SINTHAWANON HAS BEEN NAMED AS THAILAND'S FIRST AMBASSADOR TO THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM. DR. KOSON IS PRESENTLY SERVING AS AMBASSADOR TO TURKEY AND WAS PREVIOUSLY DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE POLITICAL DEPARTMENT OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTRY UNDER THE KUKRIT AND SENI GOVERNMENTS.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BANGKO 13341 100922Z

3. KLOT WISETSURAKAN HAS BEEN NAMED TO REPLACE ARUN PANUPONG AS AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED STATES. MR. KLOT, WHO RECEIVED HIS MA FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF INDIANA, PREVIOUSLY SERVED AS COUNSELLOR AT THE UNITED NATIONS (1971-72), DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE ECONOMIC DEPARTMENT OF THE MFA (1972-74), AMBASSADOR

TO THE PHILIPPINES (1974-77), AND AMBASSADOR TO SWITZERLAND (1977-PRESENT). ARUN WAS NAMED UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN JANUARY. VARACHIT NITIBHOL, PRESENTLY AMBASSADOR TO IRAN, WILL REPLACE MR. KLOT AS AMBASSADOR TO SWITZERLAND.

4. DR. SOMPONG SUCHARITKUN PRESENTLY SERVING AS AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE, WILL BE RECALLED TO TAKE UP POST AS DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE TREATIES AND LEGAL DEPARTMENT OF THE MFA. DR. SOMPONG WILL BE REPLACING HIS BROTHER, RONGPET SUCHARITKUN, WHO WILL BECOME AMBASSADOR TO THE NETHERLANDS.

5. WIKROM NILNART, PRESENTLY AMBASSADOR TO SWEDEN, WILL SUCCEED DR. SOMPONG AS AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE.

6. SUBAN SAWETTAMAL, AMBASSADOR TO SOUTH KOREA, WILL REPLACE MR. WIKORM AS AMBASSADOR TO SWEDEN.

7. ASA BUNYAPRATHUNG, PRESENTLY DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS DEPARTMENT OF THE MFA, WILL SUCCEED MR. SUBAN AS AMBASSADOR TO SOUTH KOREA.

8. COMMENT: ABOVE APPOINTMENTS ALL INVOLVE QUALIFIED AND EXPERIENCED THAI DIPLOMATS. APPOINTMENT OF DR.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BANGKO 13341 100922Z

KOSON AS AMBASSADOR TO VIET-NAM IS OF SPECIAL INTEREST, AS KOSON IS ONE OF THE ABLEST OF THE YOUNGER THAI DIPLOMATS. LOSON (CONCERNING WHOM AMPLE BIO INFO IS AVAILABLE IN DEPT.) WAS SUSPENDED AS DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE POLITICAL DEPT. OF MFA IN OCT., 1976, FOLLOWING THE MILITARY TAKEOVER OF THE RTG THAT MONTH. HE HAD INCURRED THE IRE OF THE THAI MILITARY IN CONNECTION WITH THE ABORTIVE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE U.S. IN EARLY 1976 OVER A RESIDUAL AMERICAN MILITARY PRESENCE IN THAILAND. KOSON WAS SUBSEQUENTLY APPOINTED THAI AMBASSADOR TO TURKEY, A POST WHICH, HE TOLD OUR AMBASSADOR TO ANKARA, HE CONSIDERED TANTAMOUNT TO EXILE. APPOINTMENT OF KOSON TO HANOI WILL CERTAINLY POSE A CHALLENGE TO THIS GIFTED AND CAPABLE FIGURE. MFA HAS SEEN DIPLOMACY AS THAILAND'S STRONGEST AVAILABLE CARD IN DEALING WITH THE VIETNAMESE. KOSON'S APPOINTMENT IS BOTH RECOGNITION OF HIS CAPACITY AND A SIGN OF HIS REHABILITATION IN THE THAI DIPLOMATIC SERVICE.

WHITEHOUSE

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